



# The Information Edge

Current Legal News from Collin County's  
Curt B. Henderson Law Library

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## Useful Internet Sites and Articles

### **The Role of Texas Government Offices**

KETR, a member of the National Public Radio network, recently did a broadcast from KUT's Ben Philpott highlighting some of the Texas government offices and their responsibilities. Below is a summary of three of the offices covered. A link to the full series by Mr. Philpott is available [here](#).

#### ***Texas Land Commissioner and the Texas Land Office***

According to its website, The Texas General Land Office is the oldest state agency in Texas and was established in the Constitution of the Republic of Texas. The agency's mission is to "serve the schoolchildren, veterans, and the environment of Texas. The agency does so by preserving our history, maximizing state revenue through innovative administration, and through the prudent stewardship of state lands and natural resources." During the broadcast, Mr. Philpott discussed the role of the Land Office with Bill Peacock, the vice-president of research at the Texas Public Policy Foundation. Mr. Peacock further explains the importance of the Texas Land Commissioner and the Land Office in the following way: "The primary function of the Land Commissioner and Land Office is to manage those lands to bring in revenue for the permanent school fund. And that in turn puts money into the available school fund which is used to help support public education - particularly in support of purchasing textbooks for students." According to Mr. Philpott's report, the \$37.3 billion Permanent School Fund referenced by Mr. Peacock gives more money to Texas public schools than the Texas Lottery.



The map is an 1849 map of Texas compiled by Land Office records, courtesy of KETR's website.

#### ***Clarifying the Role of the Attorney General***

Most people think the main role of the attorney general is putting criminals in jail, but that is not, in fact, accurate according to Mr. Philpott. While that may be part of the job in the case of a local district attorney being recused or a district attorney needing assistance in prosecuting a case, that is not the main duty. Mr. Philpott's report includes the following explanation from former state Solicitor General Julie Parsley: "The attorney general is really the state's attorney. He or she defends the state's laws and Constitution. They represent the state and its agencies, which is a very important thing to do. But there's also ... a myriad of things that they do by state law, too." Ms. Parsley points out that consumer protection is another huge responsibility of the Attorney General's office. The Attorney General has a large section on its website dedicated to its Consumer Protection Division which has invaluable resources for Texans, including helpful tips when buying a new or used car, credit card and debt collection and management assistance, and a large section on identity theft and the proactive steps one can take after becoming a victim.

#### ***Texas Agricultural Commissioner and the Department of Agriculture***

The Texas Constitution did not originally designate the position of an agricultural commissioner but that was remedied in 1907. Now the Commissioner finds himself performing old and new duties. Mr. Philbott explains that the older duties were the reason the need for the commissioner existed. These duties include helping ranchers and farmers deal with threats to agriculture, whether the threat comes from pests or diseases. One of the newer duties for the commissioner is a continuing effort to make school lunches healthier. Mr. Philbott also reports that the Department of Agriculture is the state certifier of weights and measures. During his discussion with Mr. Philbott, Mr. Peacock explains, "They do gas pumps. They do weights in grocery stores. Anytime the public is being sold a quantity of something, more than likely the scales and measurements that are being used are certified by the Ag Department."

Copies of these articles are available in the library, or from the law librarian via email:  
[droberts@co.collin.tx.us](mailto:droberts@co.collin.tx.us)

## Spotlight on the Supremes

On January 2, 2018, outgoing Texas Supreme Court Justice Don Willett was sworn into the 5th Circuit United States Court of Appeals by Chief Justice Nathan Hecht. To fill his place, Governor Abbott appointed and swore in Justice James Blacklock. Prior to joining the Texas Supreme Court, James Blacklock held the position of Governor Abbott's general counsel since 2015 after spending six years working in the Texas Attorney General's office. Justice Blacklock's complete biography is available on the Supreme Court of Texas [website](#).

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Hours of Operation:  
Monday–Friday  
8:00 am–5:00 pm

Note: Computers will  
automatically log off  
at 4:50 p.m.

## Did You Know?

In April of 2017, the State Bar of Texas started the Texas Opportunity & Justice Incubator (TOJI) under the leadership of past State Bar president Frank Stevenson. According to the January 2018 *Texas Bar Journal*, the program currently has “2 cohorts of 10 attorneys each.” When a third cohort joins the program in April 2018, TOJI “will be one of the largest legal incubators of the nearly 70 programs operating worldwide.” The mission of TOJI is “to expand access to justice for low-and-moderate-income Texans by helping new lawyers establish sustainable practices that service this population.” The lawyer participants are not employees of the State Bar or TOJI but rather establish their own business while being trained in business operations, marketing and client relations. Lawyers are required to provide at least 100 hours of pro bono legal assistance during the first year in the program.

Also in the January 2018 *Texas Bar Journal* is the announcement of a new keyboard designed specifically for attorneys by LegalBoard. The designer worked with engineers to develop a keyboard that switches between “lawyer mode” and “standard mode.” When in lawyer mode, the various keys input terms and symbols frequently used by attorneys. For example, the number “7” key will populate the “section” symbol. More information is available at [legalkeyboards.com](http://legalkeyboards.com).

## Library Reminders

As a reminder, the law library is no longer offering IOUs. Payment must be received at the time the prints, copies or faxes are completed. The only acceptable forms of payment are cash or a check with an unexpired driver's license. Prints and copies are \$0.10 per page and faxes are \$1.50 for the first page and \$1.00 for all subsequent pages. Receipts are available upon request. Pages printed or copied in error must be included in the total number of pages.

Cash Receipt		Receipt Number: _____
		Date: _____
Received from _____	the amount of \$ _____	
For _____		
Current Balance: \$ _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Cash
Payment Amount: \$ _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Check
Balance Due: \$ _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Money Order
Received By: _____		
Cash Receipt Template		



Kindly remember to log out of any personal accounts accessed on the library's public computers, including email. Any items saved on the desktop or on the computer will be deleted by library staff. The computers are accessed several times a day and it is imperative that no personal or confidential information remains on the computers.

## WestlawNext News

### Join us for a WestlawNext CLE Training Class on May 16 at 2:30 p.m!

The Curt B. Henderson Law Library is hosting a WestlawNext CLE training class on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. The free class will be taught by Thomson Reuters employee Jeanette Alford and will be held in the law library in the lower level of the Russell A. Steindam Courts Building. One hour of CLE credit (non-ethics) is available for the course. If you have any questions about the course please contact the law library. The training will cover Westlaw content available to our law library patrons as well as new features and tools on Westlaw designed to save researchers time and get answers quickly.



## Cybersecurity Tips

As part of its yearlong series on cybersecurity issues, the *ABA Journal* recently published an article entitled “5 Cybersecurity Steps You Should Already be Taking” (published online on January 10, 2018). The 5 steps are summarized below but the complete article is available [here](#).

1. For those wondering whether or not personal information has been hacked there is a website that will provide that information. [www.haveibeenpwned.com](http://www.haveibeenpwned.com) allows the user to input an email address or username and if either has been hacked, the email address or username will appear in the site’s database of publicly known hacks.
2. For every website that requires a password, create a different password and use a password manager to keep track. Password managers store multiple passwords and are simple to use.
3. Create strong passwords and do not use personal information in the passwords. The National Institute of Standards and Technology suggests using a line from a book or a song that is easy for the user to remember. Also, unless you have been hacked, it is not necessary to randomly change your passwords.
4. Consider using two-factor authentication which is a two-step process for signing into an account. Upon entering an email address, you will receive a text message or email with a unique passcode that must be entered before accessing the account. A list of companies that provide two-factor authentication is available at <https://twofactorauth.org/>.
5. Encrypt your devices in order to safely secure phones, tablets and computers.

## Tech Tips: More Useful Apps and Law Blogs

- **Scannable**—available for both Apple and Android products. Scannable is an app that turns phones or tablets into a portable scanner. Nearly anything can be scanned, including books, articles and photos just by hovering the phone over the items. The app will automatically find the edges of the document, scan it, and convert it to a PDF or JPEG. The basic plan is free while the business plan is \$12 per user per month.
- **IKE**— this free app is a to-do list app named after former President Dwight D. Eisenhower who said, “What is important is seldom urgent, and what is urgent is seldom important.” The quote is the basis for this app which uses the Eisenhower Decision Matrix, utilizing four quadrants to help the user prioritize. The quadrants can be personalized by re-naming them to suit the user. The app allows the user to create check-lists, set due-dates and reminder alarms and add images and notes to each task.
- **Zotero**—free tool that helps organize research into folders and saves metadata associated with each article, image or video file. Zotero also accesses over 8,000 citation styles, including *The Bluebook* and quickly creates citations with a click of a button.
- <https://www.texasbartoday.com/texas-law-blogs/> - available on the State Bar website, a free blog site written by attorneys throughout Texas on virtually all practice areas.



**The Law Library**  
**will be closed**  
**on Friday,**  
**March 30, 2018**  
**for Good Friday.**



## New on the Shelf

- Handbook on Texas Discovery Practice -2017-2018
- West's Texas Local Government Code—2018 Edition
- Winning in the Beginning by Winning the Beginning—2017-2018
- Depositions: Procedure, Strategy & Technique, 3d Edition
- Texas Rules of Evidence Handbook—2018
- Texas Forms Real Estate (Commercial and Residential)-2018
- West's Texas Corporation and Partnership Laws—2018 Edition
- West's Texas Criminal Procedure Code and Rules—2018 Edition
- Supreme Court Practice—10th Edition
- O'Connor's Texas Business and Commerce Code Plus—2017-2018
- Texas Insurance Code—2018 Edition
- West's Texas Property Code -2018 Edition
- West's Federal Sentencing Guidelines Digest—2018
- O'Connor's Texas Family Law Handbook—2018
- Bankruptcy Code, Rules & Official Rules—2017-2018
- O'Connor's Texas Employment Codes Plus—2017-2018
- Texas Construction Law Manual—2017-2018 Edition
- Texas Elder Law—2017-2018

## Stu's Views

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